

Annex "A, " Subparagraph 1j,
Sociological Background

EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND

87/ In order to understand the changes brought about by the Communists in the educational system of China, it is necessary to review the background of educational development under the Nationalist regime.

87/ Chapter II, Article 11, of the Nationalist Constitution promulgated in 1946 states that
186 the "people have freedom of speech, [freedom of the] pursuit of knowledge, and [freedom of] publication." Article 21 of the same chapter further spells out the principle of education by stating that the "people have the right as well as the duty to receive basic education." Interpretations of these broad principles are found in Chapter XIII, which specifies, among other things, that the purpose of education includes the development of the spirit of nationalism, and that both public and private educational institutions are subject to government supervision according to law.¹

Nationalist officials singled out two of

1. Chung-kuo Chiao-yl Nien-chien 1948 [Educational Yearbook of China 1948], Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1948, pp. 23-24.

871 the most controversial points for further
186 elaboration. One is the so-called "spirit of
nationalism" which the Ministry of Education
at Nanking defined as the spirit based on San-
min Chu-i, the Three Principles of the People
expounded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen (See chapter on
Political Dynamics in this handbook). Thus
a mild reform was adopted as the central
theme of the Nationalist philosophy for educa-
tion. The other controversial point is the
extent of government supervision over educa-
tional institutions. Official explanation stressed
the supervisory function of the government in
the system of education and denied that this
implied any authoritarian control.²

874 Under the Nationalist government, efforts
2/2 were exerted to promote adult education and
combat illiteracy. Outstanding records were
made by such people as James Yen, (an inter-
nationally known promoter of mass education)
who organized drives to eradicate illiteracy,
and Huang Yen-p'ei, now a member of the
Communist central government, who did a
great deal for the development of vocational
education in China. Since most of these
features are discussed in anyone of the numer-
ous books on education in China, it is enough
to say here that had it not been for a decade of
war, general education in China would have

2. Ibid., p. 24. For other influential
theories on education expounded during World
War II in China see Chan-shih Chiao-yü Lun-
chi [Discussions on Wartime Education], Shang-
hai, Sheng-huo chiao-yü she, 1938.